

The Coming Day.

OCTOBER, 1891.

As we have now come within sight of the end of our first year, we know that many friends of *The Coming Day* will like to know how it fares. The very brilliant promise of its first few months has not been quite maintained. Probably many who bought it out of curiosity have been more than satisfied, the taste for resolute inquiry not being yet largely developed in this conservative and cautious country. Outspoken heresy must be prepared to be often turned out into the cold. On the other hand, we have received, from the first, the very warmest welcome from hundreds of unknown friends, to whom it is a real pleasure to send our monthly message; and many new friends have arrived since we began.

We have found, however, that where ground has been lost it has mainly been in connection with the price of *The Coming Day*. It is compared with *The Christian World*, *The Review of Reviews* and *Bow Bells*, and it is called "dear." People forget that papers such as these named make a fortune out of advertisements, and that where *The Coming Day* sells one copy they may sell five hundred. Besides, we greatly prefer to present our messenger in the best possible form, and to print in it only such things as will be of permanent interest and use.

We confess to being occasionally a little pained when we are told that *The Coming Day* is "dear,"—and told it by persons who say they are in sympathy, and declare that, though they like everything in it, they can hardly bring their minds to pay for a whole year less than the price of a modest seat at a theatre for one evening. They forget that the Editor has to do all the work, take all the responsibility, and face a probable loss of several pounds a year. But, merely on the score of value, we ask them to read the present or any number through and say whether, as John Ruskin would say, it is not worth the price of a questionable cigar or pint of beer.

It is not usual to indulge in these confidences with the readers of magazines,—perhaps it would do good if there were more frankness and simplicity all round: but *The Coming Day* professes to cultivate a closer communion than is usual between its editor and its readers; and it may be useful if, once for all, those who sympathise with its spirit and aims are invited to stand together, not as readers who want "plenty for their money," but as comrades who are going the same way, and want to help at the same work.

We feel, however, the desirability of increasing the size of *The Coming Day* whenever it can be prudently done. In the meantime, it has been decided to commence the new year with a change which will enable us to add considerably to the carrying capacity of our sixteen pages.

FROM MOLECH TO FATHER :

AN ILLUSTRATION OF NATURAL ADVANCE IN RELIGIOUS INSIGHT AND TRUST.

SALVATION for Christendom is to be found in one direction ;—in the discovery of the simple but revolutionary fact that there has been a natural advance of the human race in relation to Religion,—an advance as natural, and as free from miracle, as the progress of the race in relation to the sciences and arts—or in relation to systems of government. The vital question is never, What has God chosen to *reveal*? but, What has man been able to *see*? For it is with man in his religious perceptions as it is with the child in his secular learning. The child is only able to learn its letters: the boy goes on to spelling words: the youth to the joys of reading fairy tales and stories of adventure: and it is the man who marches on to the glorious wonderland of science, poetry, and philosophy.

Of Jesus it was wisely said that he came “in the fulness of time” :—the child of the age that produced him, and the product of the ages that were before him :—and it is not to be doubted that if Jesus could come again in the flesh,—and could escape that which is more overwhelming than the rage of the mob, and crucifixion by the rulers—the ignorant neglect of the multitude, and the indolent neglect of the lawmakers—he would be in some things keener and greater than he could have been 1800 years ago.

“From Molech to Father”: what a march! Molech was one of the fire-gods of the old world: an ugly heathen devil-god, one might call him, of whom that distressingly besotted people, the ancient Hebrews, became enamoured, but who met his match in the gallant young king Josiah of whom we read; “And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom—so that no one might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.” As we pass on to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, and other radical reformers, we see these old Hebrews on the march—or some of them. The devil-gods have disgusted the religious geniuses of the nation, who, though they may have to denounce priesthood and idolatry, are manifestly the true leaders of the nation, though often in a minority.

But it is when we open the Gospels that we enter into a new world. Hardly a trace of the old devil-worship remains. Only one God is left,—the Heavenly Father, the Lover of the pure in heart, the Blesser of the merciful; the Guardian of the little child. No wonder Jesus was misunderstood. His supreme religious genius carried him to the cross. There was no help for it. The national religion, in so far as it had ceased to be devil-worship, had become mild incantation or mere formality. Jesus was forced into active opposition—into denunciation—into satire—into defiance of priests, and “scribes and pharisees, hypocrites”: and they *had* to kill him. It was the well-known conventional reply to the otherwise unanswerable radical.

The advance of Jesus was too great even for his own followers. Even to his immediate disciples he had to say; “I have many things to say unto you but ye

cannot bear them now": and, when he was gone, those who called themselves by his name soon forgot his spirit or drifted back from his elevated point of view. His own church could not keep up with him. To this very hour we find it difficult to be literal when we read what we call his commands. Think of the early fight between Paul and "the people who seemed to be somebody" at Jerusalem. Think of the old Roman Catholics,—of the Middle Ages,—of the murdering Catholics and Protestants of a few hundred years ago,—of John Calvin, of Mr. Spurgeon, of an average Scotch Presbyter.

But let us retrace our steps. Take one great crucial test, lying half way in the long sad path that reaches from Molech to Father. There, at that halting place, lies the colossal figure of the Old Testament *Jehovah*,—an awful presence! Think of that honestly, and without shrinking. Think of His fury, His self-assertion, His arbitrary unreasonableness, His reckless favoritism, His cruelty. Why, the Jehovah who was substituted for Molech was too often a sort of invisible Molech himself. We have had to slowly outgrow all that: and even now there are many Unitarians who will think this shocking. But is it as shocking as this, for instance:—Opening a large "Family Bible," to find the Book of Joshua, we opened at the Book of Judges instead, and at a place where a frightful picture tells the story of the fulfilment of Jephthah's vow. Kneeling on the floor is a beautiful woman, with blind-folded eyes and breast bared. Over her stands a disreputable looking old ruffian with an uplifted knife which he is about to plunge into her body: and all this is told and pictured as quite right. This Jephthah had, it is said, "the spirit of the Lord" given to him, when he made a bargain with the Lord, that if he would give him the victory in an approaching battle he would sacrifice to "the Lord" the first being that came out of his house to meet him. "The Lord" did give him the victory, and the vow was kept: and his daughter whose love and delight brought her out first, was taken;—and the picture tells the rest. And yet, after that, "the Lord" goes on making Jephthah to prosper, and caused him to be chief ruler in Israel six years. There does not seem much to choose between Molech and Jehovah. But, to return to the Book of Joshua. Out of very many similar passages we will only refer to the following; x., 8-14, and 28-40. It may, perhaps, be as well if we allow another to point the moral;—"The God that the Jews worshiped with their hundreds and thousands of sacrifices of birds and cattle, the God that they thought of as living just a little way above the blue in the heavens, and as having chosen them for his peculiar people and standing in a position of enmity towards all the rest of the world, that God, jealous and cruel, that God no longer lives in the thought or in the worship of the intelligent modern world. So Zeus and all his court of gods and goddesses that used to reign on Olympus,—they, too, are dead. The gods of Egypt are dead, the God of the Middle Ages is dead, the God of Calvin is dead. Yes, the God of only a hundred years ago, even in those churches that think they are unchanged, that think they still retain the faith of the fathers, is not alive in their faith and in their real creeds. The God of the Shorter Catechism; the God of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith; the God of the Westminster Confession; this God who sits so far from the earth and looks upon it as a rebel province, who treats its inhabitants as his enemies instead of as his children, who has fore-ordained everything that is to come to pass,—this God who hates, this God who is ready to condemn, is no longer a living power in the hearts or the thoughts of the great masses of the people."

So far from shocking us, statements such as these should gladden us and make us hopeful: for the heavenly advance is going on: and God intended it. And yet think of the tragic fact that, at every stage, the brighter and more advanced spirits,—the children of the day,—the questioners and pioneers,—have been the hated heretics. Who was it said that "blasphemy" is only "a question of geography"? It is as true that it is only a question of epoch.

" 'Tis here, 'tis there, all round about in spots,
Alike in no two sections of the globe,
What's 'blasphemy' with us in Christendom
Would make us solid with the pious Turk."

The lesson? Simply this,—that mankind is on the march, and that imperfection must mark all our thoughts and conclusions on the way. But the good, all-wise God is always better and wiser than we imagine—always more fatherly than man can ever know.

What then? Simply this,—that we may trust our best and most hopeful thoughts.

"Our faiths are foolish by falling below,
Not coming above what God will show ;
The commonest thing holds a wonder vast,
To whose beauty our eyes have never past ;
God's fact, in the present or in the to be,
Outshines the best that we think we see."

If we believe that, trust that, and march by that, our faith will never lead us to enmity or terror; it must always work in the direction of trust in God and goodwill towards man.

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

THE quaint and plain-spoken document, beginning with "dearly beloved" and appropriately ending with the word "amazement," and known as "The form of Solemnization of Matrimony," is ripe for reform. We believe that, occasionally, the Service is abridged by conscientious or considerate clergymen, but we hardly think this is often done, and yet, as it stands, it must be a terrible trial to multitudes of decent and thoughtful people. As for the poor clergyman who feels bound to use it just as it stands, it would be difficult to exaggerate the seriousness of his position as a 19th century Englishman.

In the opening Address, put into his mouth, he is made to say that marriage was "instituted by God in the time of man's innocence;" and, in one of the appointed prayers, the unhappy man is made responsible for the assertion that "God, at the beginning, did create our first parents, Adam and Eve, and did sanctify and join them together in marriage." It must make many a well-instructed clergyman wince, to say that; and must make many an enlightened layman want to laugh. We all know perfectly well that there never was a time of "man's innocence," and that Adam and Eve were not created and married in the beginning.

The clergyman is also saddled with the fable of the creation of woman from a rib of man—a grotesque story which, by itself, ought to stamp the whole narrative as a quaint romance. But, in one of the prayers, the assertion has to be made by the clergyman that “out of man woman took her beginning.” It is doubtful policy to go on floating marriage on such aerial foundations.

In like manner, the clergyman is ordered to say, in one of his prayers, that God “by his mighty power made all things of nothing”—a palpable endorsement of the opinion that, by a kind of magic, such as is inferred in the Book of Genesis, the heavens and the earth were called into existence—a notion which any modern man ought to be ashamed to harbour.

But there are graver causes of offence. For instance, the clergyman is instructed to say to the Almighty in a prayer; “knitting them (Adam and Eve) together (Thou) didst teach that it should never be lawful to put asunder those whom thou by Matrimony hadst made one.” And, in conformity with that, when the marriage is completed, the priest says: “Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.” Of course, this is the logical doctrine of the Church; and it is as perfect a piece of priestcraft as is to be found in the civilised world: but it has become obsolete by stress of circumstances, by the pressure of facts, and by force of law. It has been found out that to be married by a priest is *not* the same thing as to be united by God, and that man *has* to put asunder those whom the Church has joined together. It is a national scandal that, in the State Church, the State official is allowed and commanded to bluntly contradict the law.

A similar illustration of priestcraft is obtrusively afforded in the Address to the bride and bridegroom, in which occurs the declaration that “so many as are coupled together otherwise than God’s word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their matrimony lawful.” This was and is intended to be a reservation of the right of marriage to the Church only; and, though the State now allows and provides for a “civil” marriage in the registrar’s office, the doctrine of the State Church is that such a marriage is not a “joining together by God,” and is radically bad.

The coarse statements of the opening Address, respecting the reasons for the ordaining of marriage by God, and the prayer towards the close, when the Almighty is indecently and superstitiously asked to assist “with (his) blessing these two persons that they may be fruitful,” &c., create a difficulty of which little need be said, but which must often furnish much food for thought, and make it a mercy that the church’s prayers are said with hidden face and on bended knees.

The barbaric survival of “giving the bride away” is hardly understood. The clergyman, in asking, “Who giveth this Woman to be married to this Man?” asks a very old question which takes us back to the days when a woman was a chattel, a something to be sold or—“given away.” The man is not “given away”;—by no means! That is reserved for the marketable commodity; and this semi-barbaric service endorses this fine old-crusted doctrine of the rights of—*man*!

We will dismiss this unpleasant subject with a brief reference to the great

falschold which the priest puts into the mouth of the bridegroom ; "with this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow : in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is significant that the man has to be "taught by the Priest" to say this. He would never say it if left to himself ! for it is perhaps the greatest and most serious lie which an honest man is ever tempted to tell. "With my body I thee worship" is utter nonsense or blazing idolatry : "with all my worldly goods I thee endow" is a palpable and discreditable untruth : and (in the circumstances) "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" is sheer blasphemy. As to the endowment, until lately the very reverse of the declaration was true ; and it was the poor bride who gave up everything to the bridegroom : and, even now, the wife has to look sharp if she is to protect and possess even her own earnings. Such cant ! and "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," too !

How any truthful, self-respecting man or woman can face all this tangle of ignorance and falsehood, indecency and superstition, it is very difficult to understand. But the very last thing that a fashionable State Church encourages is *thought*.

A SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE.

VI.

The unseen Universe considered as the sphere of first causes and ultimate effects in relation both to Matter and Spirit.

ALWAYS and everywhere, as though impelled by an intellectual, not to say a spiritual necessity, civilised and, to a very great extent, savage man has regarded the Unseen as the sphere of first causes and ultimate effects. When man simply cringed before the spirit-people of that dread Unseen, or grovelled before the lords many and gods many of its awful regions, that happened which happens now, when the adoring soul lifts itself to the Great Father, or the man of Science finds in surrounding space the subtle forces by which all things live and move and have their being. In each case, the unseen Universe was or is felt to contain the great secret of all being. The authors of that very remarkable book, *The Unseen Universe*, speak thus far the latest word of modern Science when they say, "We are compelled to imagine that what we see has originated in the unseen. And we must resort to the unseen not only for the origin of the molecules of the visible Universe, but also for an explanation of the forces which animate these molecules. So that we are compelled to conclude that every motion of the visible Universe is caused by the unseen, and that its energy is ultimately carried again into the unseen." Is not this wonderfully suggestive ? All the sources and energetic causes of life come from the Unseen, and the energy thus produced goes back again into the Unseen. What if, as the splendid result, the Intelligence, the Personality, that are here grown and developed, pass into the Unseen with their glorious gains ! The suggestion seems to be actually forced upon us, that man himself is only one of many wonderful products of the all diffused vital energy. He is too feeble, too limited, too modern, to be anything but a trifling part of a stupendous whole ; and all the world of Matter as we know it is also too much

like himself to be anything but one of the latest products of the mighty creative Power. Thus, as we gaze and ponder, the sense of our littleness, and its correlative, the sense of dependence, grow upon us. "We are entire believers in the infinite depth of nature," say the authors of the book I referred to just now, "and hold that just as we must imagine space and duration to be infinite, so must we imagine the structural complexity of the Universe to be infinite also." They suggest, what is indeed the obvious truth, that the *visible* Universe forms perhaps "only an infinitesimal portion of that stupendous whole which is alone entitled to be called the *Universe*." As a simple matter of fact we know that with relation to our own globe. We only see a minute portion of what there is to see; and we have only to reflect upon what happens every year during the summer months in order to make it apparent how literally true it is that the visible is produced by the invisible. All the glory of leaf and flower, whence comes it? Every particle was first in the surrounding invisible atmosphere, that wondrous laboratory of Nature; every tint of colour and essence of odour existed first in the Unseen. The sun every year pours upon us, from the Unseen, incalculable floods of energy which are transmuted into solid forms and glowing colours, for beauty or for use; and every year, too, a flood of life and beauty ebbs back into the Unseen. And what is true for us and for our tiny globe, we may reasonably conclude is true in the vast Universe beyond. We are told that "all but a very small portion of the sun's heat goes day by day into what we call empty space, and it is only this small remainder which can be made use of by the various planets for purposes of their own." "Could anything be more perplexing," it is asked, "than this seemingly prodigal expenditure of the very life and essence of our system?" Only "a petty fraction" of this tremendous flood of energy is used by the visible Universe. What becomes of the remainder? The conclusion is drawn that the unseen Universe, from which come all the sources of our life, itself receives and uses the tremendous forces from the sun, that it is itself the seat of life, and is of an "extremely complicated structure;" and that, therefore, it is not only able to *receive* the energy that flows through it, but also to use it for its own more subtle and exalted conditions of existence. Thus we arrive at the stupendous conclusion that the Unseen is at once the source, receptacle, and laboratory of energy and vitality immeasurably surpassing anything within the present experience of man.

At this point it may be once more in place and of use to insist on the fact that the subtle nature of what we call the spirit in man is not more subtle than the forces with which Science has to deal. We are reminded by Mr. Tyndall that "within our atmosphere exists a second and a finer atmosphere, in which the atoms of oxygen and nitrogen hang like suspended grains. This finer atmosphere unites not only atom with atom, but star with star; and the light of all suns, and of all stars, is in reality a kind of music, propagated through this interstellar air." Or, to use the words of another thoughtful and advanced student, "the invisible, intangible, imponderable force of which we speak as spirit, or vital principle, although too subtle to be brought to the scale beam or collected in the receiver is yet not altogether removed from the sphere of direct scientific experiment. *Science* is aware of invisible, intangible, imponderable forces, which are neither imaginary nor incapable of some degrees of actual measurement. Such are the electric, the

magnetic, and the actinic forces. Such is gravity." But, in fact, the mystery of Thought itself, familiar as we are with it, is greater than the mystery of objects and beings in an unseen Universe, for we can conceive of objects and beings existing in indefinitely finer forms elsewhere, but we cannot conceive how Thought is produced here. The materialist himself, then, in relation to Thought, has a greater mystery to solve than any connected with an unseen Universe filled with beings adapted to a more subtle form of existence.

If, then, we have to look to the unseen as the source and the ultimate receptacle of all energy, it certainly does seem a natural and inevitable inference that the Unseen universe is the home of Intelligence. It seems monstrous to assume that Intelligence should only exist in connection with Matter in its grossest forms, and that the world of first causes and ultimate effects should be the world of eternal darkness, death, and utter, hopeless solitude. Is it a rational conclusion that Consciousness should only exist in connection with the dull brain of which we are cognisant? The authors whom I have already quoted seem to me to be the true rationalists when they say, "We are absolutely driven by scientific principles to acknowledge the existence of an unseen Universe, and by scientific analogy to conclude that it is full of life and intelligence—that it is, in fact, a spiritual Universe, and not a dead one." "Specific gravity and intelligence have no necessary connection," says the gifted author of the "Correlation of physical forces." It is true that it is difficult to conceive of Intelligence existing in connection with an invisible substance; but it is not more difficult to do so than to conceive of an invisible substance existing at all, and yet we know that invisible substances abound. It is hardly a step further into mystery, it is in reality a great step towards the *solution* of mystery, to infer that Intelligence exists in the Unseen as in the Seen, and that this Intelligence is as much more refined and subtle than ours as the substances of the Unseen are more refined and subtle than ours.

Besides, it is here that the great laws of Evolution, Continuity of being, and the Conservation of force, come in with their wonderful suggestions as to the persistence of Life beyond the bounds and barriers of the Seen. Grove, in his brilliant work on Continuity, says, very pointedly:—"The same modes of thought which lead us to see continuity in the field of the microscope as in the Universe, in infinity downwards as in infinity upwards, will lead us to see it in the history of our own race": and Professor Allman, in his thoughtful British Association Address, said:—"The power of conceiving of a substance different from that of matter is still beyond the limits of human intelligence; and the physical or objective conditions which are the concomitants of thought are the only ones of which it is possible to know anything, and the only ones whose study is of value. We are not, however, on that account forced to the conclusion that there is nothing in the Universe but matter and force. The simplest physical law is absolutely inconceivable by the highest of the brutes, and no one would be justified in assuming that man had already attained the limit of his powers. Whatever may be that mysterious bond which connects organisation with psychical endowments, the one grand fact—a fact of inestimable importance—stands out clear, and freed from all obscurity and doubt, that from the first dawn of intelligence there is with every advance in organisation a corresponding advance in mind. Mind as well as body is thus travelling onwards through higher and still

higher phases ; the great law of evolution is shaping the destiny of our race : and though now we may at most but indicate some weak point in the generalisation which would refer consciousness as well as life to a common material source, who can say that in the far off future there may not yet be involved other and higher faculties from which light may stream in upon the darkness, and reveal to man the great mystery of thought ? ”

It is surely, then, almost forced upon us to infer the continuity of Thought as well as of Matter. It seems utterly unnatural to suppose that the lower should persist, and the higher fail and perish—that Matter should be able to ebb into the Unseen and flow again into the Seen, and Mind alone rise and fall on one solitary shore—begin and end on this tiny spot of earth. The inference, the longer we ponder it, becomes the more inevitable, that Life and Thought, no less than Matter, though they may know vast changes and pass into higher or more subtle forms of being, are destined to find their home in the vast Unseen. If, in the far dim past, some wise intelligence could have seen man in his early rudimentary condition, he would have seen in many a rough physical formation of the animal the first stages of a process of development that has now led on to the agile, clever, artistic *man*—would have seen the Raphael in the brute, the Shakspeare in the beast ; and all that purely on the physical side. How much rather, then, shall we see in the Raphael and the Shakspeare, ay ! and in the myriads of poor struggling, hoping, longing souls that have fought the battle of life and passed on, the rudiments of souls destined for the growths of immortality ?

The authors of the book *The Unseen Universe* say, purely from a scientific point of view, that “immortality is strictly in accordance with the principle of continuity, that principle which has been the guide of all modern scientific advance.” “We have merely to take the Universe as it is,” they say, “and, adopting the principle of continuity, insist upon one endless chain of events, all fully conditioned, however far we go either backwards or forwards. This process leads us at once to the conception of an invisible Universe, and to see that immortality is possible without a break of continuity.” Professor Cleland, in a very thoughtful British Association Address, spoke even more pointedly to the same effect. He said :—“There is evidence that animal life has reached its pre-ordained climax in humanity. . . . There seems to be some evidence that the progress of evolution is to be traced from man, not to other animal forms yet to appear, but through his psychical nature to the land unseen.”

An argument of a very interesting character, in relation to this thought, is to be found in the instinct or intuition which has undoubtedly become one of the characteristics of man, and a characteristic that only deepens and intensifies as he attains higher stages of development. This instinct or intuition is that which leads him to hope for life beyond the grave, to prepare for it, and to live with reference to it—a very suggestive fact for all who trust to Nature and her dealings, to say nothing of God.

Everywhere instinct is found to be true. The poorest and lowest creature moves on to its destiny, and often has to make provision for coming stages. Insects

innumerable have inbred instincts that lead to actions distinctly preparatory to new developments; but they need not be regarded as deliberate and conscious. Man has a *conscious* instinct or intuition as to the great change and the new life; and, in the higher stages of his being, actually lives the best part of his life here in the profoundest anticipation of life beyond. Is it possible to believe that blind instinct is unerring, while conscious intuition is utterly misleading? I think not. On the contrary I think that we must trust Nature here as we trust her elsewhere; that we must trust these outlooks of the soul, these heart yearnings, these deep, inspiring, pathetic leadings of the spirit, moving millions to live lives toned and determined by this profound conviction; that we must think of the Unseen as the seat of all causes and the final home of all effects, and that we may set our lives to the music of Immortality. So live, then,

"That, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but sustain'd and soothed
By an unfaltering trust."

IN COMPANY WITH EMERSON.

A COINCIDENCE AND A PARALLEL.

IN Emerson's 1854 New York Lecture on the Fugitive Slave Law, there is a curious passage which palpitates with interest for to-day. A short time before, the coercion of the slave, which had been an old-time custom in the South, was revived and imposed upon the North by a Bill which made the whole country the gaoler or hunter of the slave. Said Emerson, "Slavery is no longer mendicant, but is aggressive and dangerous." Then he added; "The way in which the country was dragged to consent to this, and the disastrous defection (on the miserable cry of *Union*) of the men of letters, of the colleges, of the educated men, nay, of some preachers of religion—was the darkest passage in the history." A few years after, the crash came: but "the educated men" were swept into the sea, to ride on the angry tide or be engulfed;—and yet "the Union" was saved!

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

"The essence of Christianity is its practical morals; it is there for use, or it is nothing; and if you combine it with sharp trading, or with ordinary city ambitions to glaze over municipal corruptions, or private intemperance, or successful fraud, or immoral politics, or unjust wars, or the cheating of Indians, or the robbery of frontier nations, or leaving your principles at home to follow on the high seas or in Europe a supple complaisance to tyrants,—it is a hypocrisy, and the truth is not in you; and no love of religious music or of dreams of Swedenborg, or praise of John Wesley, or of Jeremy Taylor, can save you from the Satan which you are."

WANTED : A RELIGION.

"Mankind for the moment seem to be in search of a religion. The Jewish *cultus* is declining ; the Divine, or, as some will say, the truly Human, hovers, now seen, now unseen, before us. This period of peace, this hour when the jangle of contending churches is hushing or hushed, will seem only the more propitious to those who believe that man need not fear the want of religion, because they know his religious constitution,—that he must rest on the moral and religious sentiments, as the motion of bodies rests on geometry. In the rapid decay of what was called religion, timid and unthinking people fancy a decay of the hope of man. But the moral and religious sentiments meet us everywhere, alike in markets as in churches. A God starts up behind cotton bales also."

FORMS AND FAITH.

"I am not engaged to Christianity by decent forms, or saving ordinances ; it is not usage, it is not what I do not understand, that binds me to it,—let these be the sandy foundations of falsehoods. What I revere and obey in it is its reality, its boundless charity, its deep interior life, the rest it gives to mind, the echo it returns to my thoughts, the perfect accord it makes with my reason through all its representation of God and His Providence ; and the persuasion and courage that come out thence to lead me upward and onward. Freedom is the essence of this faith. It has for its object simply to make men good and wise. Its institutions then should be as flexible as the wants of men. That form out of which the life and suitableness have departed, should be as worthless in its eyes as the dead leaves that are falling around us."

"That for which Paul lived and died so gloriously ; that for which Jesus gave himself to be crucified ; the end that animated the thousand martyrs and heroes who have followed his steps, was to redeem us from a formal religion, and teach us to seek our well-being in the formation of the soul. The whole world was full of idols and ordinances. The Jewish was a religion of forms ; it was all body, it had no life, and the Almighty God was pleased to qualify and send forth a man to teach men that they must serve him with the heart ; that only that life was religious which was thoroughly good ; that sacrifice was smoke, and forms were shadows."

"I fear there is no reliance to be put on any kind or form of covenant, no, not on sacred forms, none on churches, none on bibles. For one would have said that a Christian would not keep slaves ;—but the Christians keep slaves. Of course they will not dare to read the Bible ? Won't they ? They quote the Bible, quote Paul, quote Christ to justify slavery. If slavery is good, then is lying, theft, arson, homicide, each and all good, and to be maintained by Union societies.

"These things show that no forms, neither constitutions, nor laws, nor covenants, nor churches, nor bibles, are of any use in themselves. The Devil nestles comfortably into them all."

THE MAN FOR HIMSELF.

"We ought to be cautious in taking even the best ascertained opinions and practices of the primitive church, for our own. If it could be satisfactorily shown that they esteemed it authorised and to be transmitted for ever, that does not settle the question for us."

"Man is born with intellect, as well as with a love of sugar ; and with a sense of justice, as well as a taste for strong drink."

"The one thing not to be forgiven to intellectual persons is, not to know their own task, or to take their ideas from others. From this want of manly rest in their own and rash acceptance of other people's watchwords, come the imbecility and fatigue of their constitution."

POLITICS AND RELIGION.

WHAT is the meaning of the tradition which haunts us, like the ghost of a bad smell,—that Politics and Religion are somehow antagonistic?—that ministers, therefore, should have nothing to do with politics, and that women would be degraded if they had votes and used them? The explanation is on the surface, though few appear to have seen it.

The plain truth is that Politics have been polluted by selfishness. Politics ought to mean the art and science of good government; but, as a rule, the word has indicated an arena where men have wrestled for place, where classes have struggled for ascendancy, and where parties have fought for power. Of course, therefore, the mere teacher seemed out of place in it: and, at every stage, the mere reformer had to face the stings and arrows of the interested combatants.

Government has very largely meant the rule of the strong, bent upon getting as much as possible out of the weak: kings asserted their "right divine" to do as they like: rank and wealth insisted on having authority: vested interests only played their games against "spoliation." Bit by bit, the forces outside gathered strength. The serf saw a glimmer of light. The mere "hand" began to feel his power. Even women ventured to suggest that the government of the nation vitally concerned her. Bit by bit, the rulers, the classes, and the vested interests have had to give way: the sense of justice and pure sympathy even invading their long-defended territory, so that even they helped the urgent clamourers for reform: and, at last, we are just beginning to see the truth, that government means, not the rule of the strong, bent on getting all they can out of the weak, but the rule of all, for the purpose of defending and helping on the weak. It is a tremendous change; and, in proportion as it is perceived, accepted, and pursued, the polluted arena will be cleansed, the excluded or suspected persons will take the place of honour, the bully will make way for the teacher, and women will teach the self-seeker and the fighter to be generous and just.

BAD WORDS AND GOOD MUSIC.

In our notice of *The Messiah* we referred hopefully to the influence of Gounod, but we have been reminded of a reference to him in *The Coming Day's* predecessor, *The Truthseeker*. Alas! what we then said is only too true:—"The blatant (it is the only fitting word—the blatant) use made of the doctrine of the Trinity and the Godhead of Jesus, undoubtedly mars and ought seriously to interfere with the free use of the work. The opening words may themselves be cited as an instance of common-place and poverty:—

‘O Lord, when Thou didst rest from the work of creation,
Thou didst call very good the things which Thou hadst made :
Of the works of Thy hands, by Thy predestination,
Was the father of men appointed to be head.’

Where shall we look to find doggerel as bad as this? The verse has almost every conceivable fault in it. On the same page, ‘done’ and ‘thrown’ are supposed to rhyme. On that same page, we are told that in consequence of the Fall of Adam ‘to man heaven was closed’, and that not even ‘by blood flowing often’ could mankind ‘ever hope the Lord’s anger to soften.’ Turning over a leaf, we are taught that ‘the Lord’ went to the cross ‘as a sinner to die’, and that ‘in His holy blood’ man is ‘invested with grace from on high’. The last two pages are simply awful. The reader or listener is positively gorged with the Trinity. Jesus, we are assured, veiled his glory ‘in the womb of a virgin’. He is ‘God’, and, ‘like the Holy Ghost, is one with God the Father, in everlasting Trinity’. And the chorus *does* hammer at it!—the only bit in the whole that is repeated, in old-fashioned Oratorio style, again and again. It is a pity that so great a musical composition should be tied to a repulsive sectarian theological tract.”

LIGHT ON THE PATH.

It may interest some readers of *The Coming Day* to know that Mr. Page Hopps will conduct meetings for religious worship in the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square, London, on Sunday morning and afternoon, November 8th. Full particulars next month. Mr. Page Hopps (Lea Hurst, Leicester) will be glad to hear from any friends who may be willing to receive copies of the announcement, for distribution.

PILGRIM SONGS.—We invite the friendly

attention of our readers to the advertisement of “Pilgrim Songs,” especially as Christmas books are already on view. The book is, in every way, presentable as a gift-book, and we hope it will give pleasure to many a fellow-pilgrim. The book will be sent from Lea Hurst, Leicester, perfectly packed, to any address, on receipt of three shillings.

Mr. VOSSEY has been preaching and printing a series of Sermons on The misuse of the Old Testament by writers

of the New. In the course of his first Sermon he says; "The New Testament writers repeatedly appeal to the Hebrew Scriptures as an infallible authority, they quote texts which they ignorantly assume to be prophecies of Jesus Christ, and refer to the Scriptures generally as if they were conclusive to settle any controversy. The late Dr Hatch in his *Hibbert Lectures* made a great point of this misuse of the Old Testament by the writers of the New. In one Lecture which it was my good fortune to hear, he gave us a string of quotations from the New Testament as examples of that misuse. It was so striking, and to orthodox ears so terrible to listen to in the very Divinity School of Oxford, that we wondered at the honesty and courage of the Lecturer. But for some reason, now alas! no longer discoverable, the whole of that portion of the Lecture was omitted from the published volume. I know for certain that it was not the able and honest editor, Dr. Fairbairn, who was to blame; and it is useless to surmise now where the blame lay." This is a useful instance of the *suppositio veri* with which we are so familiar—illustrating at once Orthodoxy's meanness and fear.

SCIENCE AND SERMONS.—We have just been looking over a series of full reports of the late meetings of the British Association at Cardiff. About mid-way, we came across the following amusing note;—"Very many of the sermons preached in the town and district yesterday made direct reference to the meeting of the Association. The burden of nearly each was that there is no necessary antagonism between science and revelation; but that in so far as any contradiction seems to exist, it is only apparent; that Nature and the Bible come from one source, one mind producing both. There-

fore, this being so, that they could not conflict; and that such seeming conflict as inquirers imagined they could discover was due to the incapacity of the observer, and not to any discordance between the Book of Revelation and the Book of Nature." We never expected to again come across that old fossil. The Bible is a bit of Nature, just as a bed of clay or an extinct volcano or a fairy tale is: and we might as well talk of the harmony between extinct volcanoes and the corn fields of 1891 as between the Bible and Science. At this time of day nothing can be more preposterous than the isolation of the Bible as "the Book of Revelation," that it may be placed by the side of "the Book of Nature" as the two volumes proceeding from the same "mind." The Bible is one of the world's million records of man's voyages of discovery in search of God, and is only a "Revelation" as everything else is a revelation. There are millions of revelations, not one; and all are partial and progressive. Nothing prevents the admission of that by the clergy except want of knowledge and cant,—mainly cant. It is a hard saying, but it is true.

GOD IN HIS WORLD.—Dr. Marcus Dods is sometimes regarded as a rising sun in Scotland. He is professor of Exegetical Theology in an Edinburgh College, and the writer of many popular books. His latest book is on "the Gospel of St. John." It is hopelessly somnambulistic. The birth of Jesus he describes as "the entrance of the Creator into the world;" and he says that "the great Roman world remained in absolute unconsciousness of the vicinity of God." It is very dismal. What would Dr. Marcus Dods make of Paul's fine saying "In Him we live and move and have our being"? Does Dr. Dods really believe that God can come and go like any other giant in disguise? He

is very hard on "the great Roman world" for not believing that Jesus was God, but does not tell us what chances the Romans had of knowing anything about that humble birth. He says, "They registered His birth, took account of Him as one to be taxed, but were as little aware as the oxen with whom He shared His first sleeping place, that this was God; they saw Him with the same stupid, unconscious, bovine stare." This is as unjust as it is rude. "The great Roman world" knew nothing about the infant Jesus; and did not look at him with any sort of "stare," "bovine" or otherwise.

What would Dr. Dods think of us if we said that God is always with us,—that thousands of beautiful spirits, in the shape of poor Edinburgh men and women, live and move and have their being in Him, dwelling in God and He in them,—and yet that musty professors of old Scotch theology look on, with "stupid, unconscious, bovine stare," and see no God in their midst to-day? But we will not say it. We will only say that the humblest despised Unitarian missionary could teach this admired and influential Professor a useful lesson. He should take a course of Channing.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

"*Inspiration and Life.*" An Address by W. J. Jupp. London: James Clarke and Co. Unusually thoughtful. A Whit Sunday Address on the influence of the Holy Spirit in human affairs. Essentially a nineteenth century utterance, but in full sympathy with past aspirations and inspirations. It suggests a Holy Spirit at last flowing through a cleansed conscience and brain, and a cleansed and quieted love, too;—the true redemption of the race.

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"God in His world. An interpretation." New York (U.S.): Harper & Brothers. Our American comrades seem to be doing good work just now, and in a direction not expected by most of us here. We have received several theological works indicating refined thinking, or even belonging, one might say, to fine vision rather than deep thought. The writer of the book before us definitely claims that. His opening paragraphs remind us of the older transcendentalists, who have been curiously incarnated in many spheres of life, not forgetting politics and even

science. What if it should turn out that this supposed nation of pedlars and inventors is in reality a nation of idealists and seers? It is already glorifying Theology in a way hardly known in this country. Probably, the absence of a State Church leaves the Americans freer to face Nature. At all events, they appear to be rapidly passing away from particulars to universals, and beyond the letter to the spirit. The writer of "*God in His world*" (a "layman," we believe) might teach many things to our clerical dignitaries with their dreary conventionalities about God in the sacraments and the church:—and yet he is very responsive to the touch of many "orthodox" trusts, and to the music of many "orthodox" phrases, beyond which he finds universal and abiding truths.

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"Representative Sonnets by American Poets: with an Essay on the Sonnet, its nature and history, including many notable Sonnets of other Literatures." By C. C. Crandall. Boston (U. S.): Houghton, Mifflin & Co. An unusually

interesting volume, opening, to many, a door leading into a fresh garden, though some of us are already almost half persuaded to endorse Mr. Crandall's patriotic boast, that living American poets are holding their own against living English poets. Mr. Crandall believes that in sonnets the American poets even surpass ours in nervous energy, and in originality and movement. His book supplies the means for testing his claim. The Essay gives a pleasant analysis of the sonnet as a work of art, but is chiefly valuable for its presentation of notable sonnets of all times, chiefly English. The book is well indexed, and contains a useful account of American authors.

"Who wrote the Bible? A book for the people." By Washington Gladden. London: J. Clarke & Co. Excellent, as a substantial contribution to a rational account of the Bible. Mr. Gladden is a good guide to the half way house; and he seems to know a great deal about the other half. We find here the curious contrivance which at present serves as a kind of bridge—the theory that "The Old Testament shows us the progressive revelation of God to the Jewish people." It is impossible that this can last. The Old Testament does *not* shew us "the progressive revelation of God"; it shews us the progressive discoveries of man, and some of them are very ugly discoveries indeed. If we like to say that as God is ever leading mankind to himself therefore man's progressive thoughts of God (ugly and beautiful) are the progressive revelations of God, well and good, but, in that case, *all* the religious books of the world shew us the progressive revelation of God. Is that what Mr. Gladden and his friends mean? If so, we are perfectly at one with them: only we must be allowed to remark that this makes an end of the Bible as "The word of God," in any

honest sense. But, we repeat, Mr. Gladden has produced an excellent and useful book.

"James Freeman Clarke. An Autobiography, diary and correspondence." Edited by Edward Everett Hale. Boston (U.S.): Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Engaging and interesting from many points of view;—as history, gossip, criticism, wise teaching, but, most of all, as the life-record of a brave, gentle and most influential man. Dr. Freeman Clarke was, for nearly fifty years, a minister in Boston—a real "minister," not merely a preacher or clergyman. In a sweet but resolute way, he fought a good fight, and contrived to manifestly belong to the Church Militant and to carry on a notable "ministry of reconciliation." Dr. Hale knows as well as any man how to weave a story and tell it. This is a delightful specimen of his power.

"Modern Household Medicine."—By C. R. Fleury, M.D. Second Edition. London: E. Gould & Son. Apart from the medical value of this solid work, it is noteworthy if only for its sensible suggestions concerning habits, diet, the use of stimulants, clothing, bathing, insanitary house arrangements, education, &c. Dr. Fleury is a homeopathist, but says nothing, or next to nothing, about his system. The charm of the book is its common-sense and its very simple explanations. The habit of reading doctors' books is a pernicious one, but only good could come of being on speaking terms with such a book as this. A sensible parent might save seas of trouble and scores of pounds by knowing what is in it. There is a business-like Index.

"Sonnets and other poems." By Isabella J. Southern. London: Walter Scott. Of varied merit, but everywhere thoughtful, spiritual, pure.